

BUFFALO CHIP

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

SPRING 1999

FREEING U.S. POLITICAL PRISONERS:

THE JERICO NETWORK

Jericho is a national organization formed last year to demand immediate amnesty for all U.S. Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War. Jericho is now in the process of setting up a national organizational structure, and Tekla Johnson of Lincoln, Nebraska is coordinator of a 10-state region which includes Nebraska. Mary Dickinson, also of Lincoln, is Nebraska state coordinator. Herman Ferguson, who was in prison for 7 years as a Political Prisoner, heads the national effort to bring the plight of U.S. Political Prisoners to world attention.

A coalition of human rights groups attended a March 16 press conference in Lincoln to support Jericho's aims, among them the Nebraska Chapter of Amnesty International, Nebraskans for Peace, Lincoln Branch NAACP, and the Black Guardians (African-American Police Officers/Omaha).

Andrew Ascher, State Events Coordinator for Jericho, presented information that has come to light about COINTELPRO (the FBI's Counterintelligence Program of the 60s and 70s launched by J. Edgar Hoover against the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, and antiwar activists).

He noted that in the late 60s, Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa (then known as David Rice) had responded to police brutality in the North Omaha community by forming an organizing arm of the Black Panther Party. Their activism increased after a white police officer shot 14-year-old Vivian Strong in the back of the head. The girl had committed no crime, but had run away at the sound of police sirens.

Ascher stated that Ed's and Mondo's alleged involvement in the booby-trap bombing of Omaha Police Officer Larry Minard was manufactured through intimidation and subterfuge, and that an FBI memo obtained through the Freedom of Information Act documents that for 9 years Omaha police withheld a recording of a 911 emergency call supposedly made by 15-year-old Duane Peak, the prosecution's key witness. Ed's and Mondo's attorneys charged that the voice on the tape was not that of the 15-year-old boy whom they had questioned for hours in 1970, but rather the deep voice of an older man; and that, if the jury could have heard the tape after hearing Duane Peak's voice on the stand, they might well have reached a different verdict.

That the prosecution and imprisonment of Ed and Mondo was political was demonstrated throughout the proceedings. Peak changed his testimony seven times before implicating Rice and Poindexter, implicat-

(cont. on p. 7)

MONDO TO PETITION

NEBRASKA BOARD OF PARDONS

Mondo we Langa has decided to ask the Nebraska Board of Pardons to commute his life sentence to time served, thus making him eligible for parole. A coalition of human rights and civil rights groups and lawyers is assisting in the preparations.

In spite of the fact that the Parole Board has recommended Mondo for commutation for the past five years, and in spite of the fact that the average sentence most inmates serve for a life term is 15 years, the legal and historical processes at work in this case have kept Mondo incarcerated for over twenty-seven years.

Both the U.S. District Court and the U.S. 8th Circuit Court of Appeals found that Mondo was convicted on evidence illegally obtained, and ordered a new trial. The U.S. Supreme Court did not disagree, but ruled on technical grounds that the case must first return to the state courts. Amnesty International, along with other organizations, has called for a new trial or commutation. The copy of the FBI memo reprinted in this issue is in itself an indictment of the government's tactics.

Both Ed and Mondo have worked constructively throughout their time in prison. They have taught, they are published writers, and they have promoted self-improvement of other prisoners by encouraging creativity. They have also reached out to participate in community programs to help at-risk adolescents, and to educate African-Americans about their cultural history.

Your letters of support for commutation to time served should be addressed to the members of the Nebraska Board of Pardons: Governor Mike Johanns, Attorney General Don Stenberg and Secretary of State Scott Moore, Nebraska Board of Pardons, Box 94754, Lincoln, NE 68509. If possible, we'd appreciate your sending us a copy at: Jericho Network, PO Box 80547, Lincoln, NE 68501.

PLEASE: Help see that justice is finally served, and write to the Pardons Board!


**BLESSED ARE THEY WHO HUNGER AND
THIRST AFTER JUSTICE, FOR THEY
SHALL BE SATISFIED.**

FOR BILL FARMER: R.I.P.



THE OMAHA WORLD-HERALD, THE LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR, AND ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

In preparation for its press conference launching the campaign to free Ed and Mondo, Lincoln Jericho raised funds to pay for an ad, to be published simultaneously in the *Lincoln Journal-Star* and the *Omaha World-Herald*. The ad included reproduction of a memo written from the Omaha FBI office to J. Edgar Hoover, secured through the Freedom of Information Act. The *Lincoln Journal-Star* published; not so the *Omaha World-Herald*.

This led to news stories in both papers about the ad, and the difference in styles was as revealing as the respective ad policies. The headline in Lincoln was "29-year-old aftershocks of bombing; *World-Herald* rejects ad attacking police;" the *World-Herald* headline was "Group Seeks Freedom For Rice, Poindexter." Other interesting juxtapositions:

Journal-Star: Mary Dickinson, State Coordinator for Jericho, said, "We never thought [the ad] would be rejected. This [case] is something that Omaha is still in denial about."

World-Herald: *World-Herald* spokesman Chuck Wood said the newspaper declined to accept the advertisement

because its authenticity could not be verified [*THERE GO THE USED CAR AD REVENUES*].

Star-Journal: Tekla Johnson, interim regional coordinator for Jericho, said a *World-Herald* rep told her that "they were a privately owned newspaper and could run whatever they wanted." Wood told the *Star-Journal*, "We really don't comment on our ad policy, but we think [materials] must be fair and accurate."

World-Herald: "Our advertising acceptance policy is based on truth and good taste," said Wood. "We feel an obligation to have our paper reflect those two things. As it was presented to us, this ad did not meet those standards."

Journal-Star: Wood refused to identify the unsubstantiated claims in the ad. "It does have these claims," he said. "I don't want to say any more about it."

World-Herald: Jericho was faxed an offer to revise the ad and include documentation for its claims, but the group did not contact the newspaper again.

Journal-Star: Johnson said the [*World-Herald*] declined her offer to provide it with copies of court records that Jericho claims show Mondo and Poindexter were framed.



AND HERE IT IS: THE AD THAT'S NOT FIT TO PRINT!

"RELEASE NEBRASKA'S POLITICAL PRISONERS!

"In 1970, two members of the Black Panther Party, Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa (aka David Rice), were arrested for the bombing murder of Omaha police officer Larry Minard. Evidence and events indicate that we Langa and Poindexter were targets of the FBI's infamous COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program), in which local law enforcement colluded with the FBI (headed by J. Edgar Hoover) to 'neutralize' and dismantle political community groups like the BPP and the American Indian Movement.

"Printed below is ... an FBI memo ... [which] encourages suppression of key evidence: a tape recording of the 911 emergency call that brought Officer Minard to the house in which he was killed. In the trial, the prosecution maintained that the call was made by Duane Peak, a 15-year-old. The voice on the tape is very deep, clearly that of an older man. On the stand, Peak admitted he had been frightened by the police and gave conflicting testimony. "They said I was sitting in the electric chair," Peak said (p. 75).

"Mondo and Ed's attorneys did not receive this document until nine years after their convictions and incarcerations.

"FBI MEMO:

"DIRECTOR, FBI (157-8416)

10/13/70

"SAC, OMAHA (157-887) (P)

"DWANE CHRISTOPHER PEAK ET AL

"BM - RM

"Rebulet to Omaha dated 9/17/70 entitled "UNSUB.Bomb Explosion 2567 Ohio Street, Omaha, Nebraska, 8/17/70.

"In a preliminary hearing held 9/18/70 in municipal Court, Omaha, PEAK testified that he made the telephone call to the Omaha PD telling them that a woman was screaming in a house at 2867 Ohio Street. Police Officer LARRY MINARD was subsequently killed when a booby trap suitcase exploded as he, with other officers, answered this call.

"Assisant COP GLENN GATES, Omaha PD, advises that he feels that any use of tapes of this call might be prejudicial to the police murder trial against two accomplices of PEAK and therefore, has advised that he wishes no use of this tape until after the murder trials of PEAK and the two accomplices has been completed.

"UACB, no further efforts are being made at this time to secure additional tape recordings of the original telephone call.

"2 - Bureau

"2 - Omaha

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 5/29/79 by: s/ata"

THE TEXAS BOYCOTT, THE DEATH PENALTY, AND THE COMPASSIONATE CONSERVATISM OF GEORGE W. BUSH

THE DEATH PENALTY

Here are some names of people who have been released from Death Row when evidence (mostly gathered outside of law enforcement) proved them to be innocent.

Kirk Bloodsworth, Maryland. *Convicted 1984, released 1993*; **Ronald Kleine**, New Mexico. *Convicted 1974, released 1976*; **Joseph Burrows**, Illinois. *Convicted 1989, released 1994*; **Carl Lawson**, Illinois. *Convicted 1990, released 1996*; **Perry Cobb**, Illinois. *Convicted 1979, released 1987*; **Wilbert Lee**, Florida. *Convicted 1963, released 1975*; **Gary Gauger**, Illinois. *Convicted 1993, released 1996*; **Bradley P. Scott**, Florida. *Convicted 1988, released 1991*; **Muneer Deeb**, Texas. *Convicted 1985, released 1996*; **Verneal Jimerson**, Illinois. *Convicted 1985, released 1996*; **Delbert Tibbs**, Florida. *Convicted 1974, released 1977*; **Troy Lee Jones**, California. *Convicted 1982, released 1996*; **Darby (Williams) Tillis**, Illinois. *Convicted 1979, released 1987*; **David Keaton**, Florida. *Convicted 1971, released 1973*; **Den- nis Williams**, Illinois. *Convicted 1979, released 1996*.

More than 350 people have been executed in the U.S. since 1990. The ratio of human beings put to death to those proven innocent and released amounts to about 7 to 1. Over 3,300 people currently await their deaths at the hands of U.S. authorities. **You do the math.**



BOYCOTT TEXAS!!!

As reported in the Winter issue of *Buffalo Chip*, the Canadian Coalition Against the Death Penalty (CCADP) has launched a drive to boycott travel to the state of Texas, and purchase of any goods from corporations with a substantial presence there.

On the eve of the EUROTEx conference in Dallas last month, Amnesty International issued a news release accusing Texas of putting modern technology to macabre and unacceptable use.

The two-day conference will host some 200 information technology companies from Europe, aiming to build relationships with their Texas counterparts.

But Amnesty International members are reminding conference participants that Texas is in the forefront of high technology appliance to executions. "Since 1982, 172 inmates have been taken from their cells in Ellis Unit 1 in Huntsville, and put to death by the so-called 'high-tech' method of lethal injection," Amnesty International said today. "While the world moves towards finally banning the death penalty, Texas is leading the USA's relentless resort to this punishment." Nine prisoners have been executed so far in Texas in 1999, and over 450 men and women are on the state's death row.

Amnesty International noted it was not advocat-

ing a boycott or disinvestment, or criticizing the European companies involved in the conference. "We simply believe that companies should be aware of the human rights situation in countries they do business with, and use their influence wherever they can for the good of human rights," the organization said.



AND GEORGE W. BUSH

"I want to see prosperity spread its wings all across America." *Texas Governor George W. Bush*

Some statistics on the wingspread in Texas:

- * 50th in per capita spending on government programs
- * 5th in the percentage of people living in poverty.
- * 1.4 million children in Texas have no health insurance.
- * 47th in the delivery of social services
- * 38th in teacher salaries
- * Pioneer in privatizing the state's \$8 billion welfare system. The bidders for certifying clients, delivering services and lowering costs: Lockheed Martin, IBM and Electronic Data Systems.



"International law is part of our law, and must be ascertained and administered by the courts of justice of appropriate jurisdiction." The Paquete Habana, 175 U.S. 677 (1900) (holding executive order in wartime invalid under customary international law).

"It is now established that customary international law in the United States is a kind of federal law, and like treaties and other international agreements, it is accorded supremacy over State law by Article VI of the Constitution." Restatement (Third) of the Foreign Relations Law of the U.S., Part I, Ch. 2 (1987) (Introductory Note).



HARAMBEE

by Mondo Wopashitwe Eyen we Langa

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization was established here at the state prison approximately two decades ago. In this time, we have sought to bring to African prisoners a sense of their/our African identity -- not just some superficial recognition of the physical characteristics that make it evident that our ancestors were from the continent of Africa. When we speak of a sense of African identity, we mean a strong identification with traditional African values, a knowledge and understanding of African history and traditions, and a loyalty and commitment to African people and our common interests.

We encourage our members to read and study and to share what they've learned. We hold discussions about past historical events, present-day events and developments, and bring in African people from outside of the prison to share their knowledge and insights with us. In addition to holding meetings and putting on special programs (Kwanzaa, African History symposium, etc.), we publish a monthly newsletter, the *Harambee Flame*. Just as the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization seeks to bring a healthy sense of cultural awareness to African prisoners, N.A.S.C.A. (Native American Spiritual and Cultural Association) and M.A.T.A. (Mexican Awareness Through Association) seek to do likewise for indigenous ("Indian") and Mexican prisoners, respectively. We don't do this work just to promote a sense of brotherhood among, for example, African prisoners, but to cultivate in our brothers this same sense for use on the outside. We don't want our brothers returning to prison. More importantly, we want them to be constructive and courageous forces in their respective communities.

In the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, we have, unfortunately, not made an effort to keep track of how well our members have done, once being released from prison, in staying out of prison. We do know that some have returned and that, among the factors that have contributed to this is the lack of social reinforcement on the outside, by which our released members can feel comfort in following principles they have learned from the organization and continuing the positive practices for which we gave encouragement.

Yes, people in and outside of the joint make their own choices and are responsible for their own actions. But how much are these choices affected by the attitudes and behaviors of other people, and how much of this "individual" responsibility must be shared by institutions that plant and cultivate certain ideas, while trying to stamp out others? As much as some of us like to preach about personal choices and individual responsibility -- particularly, as this relates to obeying or violating laws -- the fact is that none of us live in isolation from other people and their influences.

When an African prisoner is in the Harambee Afrikan

Cultural Organization, he has an opportunity to spend a significant portion of his time around other Africans who are honestly attempting to make the transition from "black" malehood to African manhood; who are making constructive use of their time by reading and studying, etc.; who are learning to practice self-respect and respect for their brothers; who are trying to rid themselves of the sickness of the European-supremacist ("racist") ideology, internalized.

When these Africans return to their 'hoods, they may need the support of groups that will reach out to them and nurture the mind-sets they have developed through their in-prison participation in the Harambee African Cultural Organization and/or similar organizations. In addition to obviously practical support related to housing, employment, etc., these men, or women, may need the company of men and women who are reading, studying, and discussing, as they grew accustomed to doing as Harambee African Cultural Organization. They may need an environment of kinship and discipline that regular organization meetings can provide. And they may need information and guidance as to activities they can get involved in in order to promote the interests of the African community and, in so doing, channel their energies constructively.

It is vital that communities play active roles in the lives of their members who have been released from prison and provide the kinds of support adequate for maximizing their constructive involvement in community affairs and minimizing their chances of re-entering the joint. Likewise, it is the released prisoner's responsibility to look out for the life of his or her community as if it were his or her very own. Through this kind of interaction between communities and released prisoners, the brakes can be put on the prison's revolving door.

HARAMBEE

THOU CROWNEST

THE YEAR

WITH

THY GOODNESS.

**PSALMS 65:11
FOR BILL FARMER**

THE MILITARY: NEW WAYS TO SPEND YOUR TAX \$

by Gar Smith

Last summer Buffalo Chip reported that the Marine Corps had launched a 2-year project to study the problems of fighting in urban areas. About 60 marine officers took part in a training program -- aided by the Chicago police. More of the same in New York City, Jacksonville, Fla., and Charleston, S.C., for "further study." The following are excerpts from a piece published in the San Francisco Bay Guardian. The author is editor in chief (on sabbatical) of Earth Island Journal -- winner of the Alternative Press Award for best scientific and environmental reporting for 1997 and 1998. He is the winner of three Project Censored reporting awards.

It was a scary sight to some South Texas residents: Black helicopters swooped in and dropped helmeted soldiers into the downtown area, even setting a fire in Kingsville.

The Army's Delta Force, a counterterrorism unit from Fort Bragg, N.C., had arrived (or was that a terrorism unit?). Maneuvers occurred around Kingsville, Corpus Christi and Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. According to Maj. Jeff Fanto, spokesman for Army Special Operations Command headquarters at MacDill A.F.B. in Florida, the training was routine. Police Chief Felipe Garza said he received about 50 phone calls from residents concerned about the maneuvers. "Some were upset, but most understood," the chief said.

Carol Darby, a spokeswoman for Army Special Operations Command in Fort Bragg, said the public never is notified before such exercises because it poses a security risk and a danger to residents, who tend to gather to watch. She said the Army would pay for any damage.

Meanwhile, the San Francisco Bay Guardian reported that the Marine Corps has finally come out of the closet on this issue, and announced that these maneuvers are not, as previously explained, to wage urban warfare in faraway places, but to be prepared to take over U.S. cities during popular insurrections. They practiced in Oakland March 15-18.

The marines say the exercise, dubbed Urban Warrior Advanced Warfighting Experiment, is designed to teach the armed forces how to distribute humanitarian aid to a big city after a disaster. But a Bay Guardian review of hundreds of pages of military documents, obtained through public records requests, from the Marine Corps' Web site, and from the Alameda County Public Library, reveals a very different mission.

The Marine Corps' plans for the invasion reveal that Urban Warrior is designed to give marines practice in seizing control of urban areas -- including taking over food and water supplies, utilities, and communications systems. And statements and articles by military leaders suggest that the armed forces are preparing themselves to contain popular uprisings -- including uprisings in U.S.

cities. A review of hundreds of pages of documents regarding Urban Warrior exercises around the country and in the Bay Area reveals no plans for providing humanitarian assistance. The actual goal of the operation is clearly stated: it is to "penetrate," "thrust," and "swarm" into urban settings to seize power plants, TV and radio stations, and food and water supplies, to suppress any local opposition -- and ultimately to control the cities. Urban Warrior strategists envision a "future battlefield" defined by stateless war in an urban terrain, against threats including "criminals with computers" and "terrorists searching for weapons of mass destruction."

And civilian residents? "Noncombatants and refugees may be as formidable a factor as the urban infrastructure," according to the Urban Warrior plan. "Refugees are likely to clog roads, inland waterways, airfields, and ports as well as presenting commanders with humanitarian support issues."

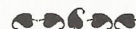
The Marines hope to deal with crowds of civilians using such "non-lethal" weapons as exploding nets, nausea-inducing ultrasound weapons, blinding laser lights, incapacitating (and potentially asphyxiating) sticky foams, and quick-drying substances that can be used to seal doorways, windows, pipes and "subterranean avenues of approach." The vast majority of these technologies, the plan states, were developed for local police to handle the anti-war and civil rights protests of the 1960s.

As to the targets of these incursions: how many 15-story urban canyons exist in third world cities? The photographs in Urban Warrior's strategic documents portray targets closer to home: Seattle, Miami, San Diego, New York City and San Francisco.

Meanwhile, the White House (a.k.a. President Clinton) has approved a plan to commission a supreme military commander to take charge in the event of a "terrorist threat" in the U.S.; and on Jan. 28 the New York Times reported that "The Pentagon has decided to ask President Clinton for the power to appoint a military leader for the continental U.S. because of what it sees as a growing threat of major terrorist strikes on U.S. soil."

The Times reported that White House officials have reacted favorably, "despite concerns from civil libertarians that 'such military power could slowly expand to threaten the privacy, liberty, and lives of private citizens.'"

Urban Warrior press representative Mark Thiffault volunteered that the marines have no plans to take over U.S. cities.



Now Available: the Fourth Edition of *Can't Jail the Spirit, a Collection of Biographies*. The book is a compendium on Political Prisoners in the United States. Both Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa, Nebraska's two contributions to this shameful list of Political Prisoners are included, with an updated biography of Mondo we Langa. The cost is \$15, plus \$3 postage; order from: Jericho Network, P.O. Box 80547, Lincoln, NE 68501

WHAT WE'RE ABOUT

Buffalo Chip is a quarterly newsletter about human rights in the U.S., published in Omaha, Nebraska. Its primary focus is on securing the release of those one hundred-plus Political Prisoners now in U.S. jails. These Political Prisoners are America's Mandelas: dissidents who were spied on, harassed, and finally convicted of crimes, often on questionable evidence. Government documents released via the Freedom of Information Act have provided evidence that the FBI as a matter of policy colluded with local police forces throughout the country to silence dissidents at any cost, even to manufacture evidence against them. These inmates continue to be punished because they fought racism and imperialism in the U.S., and freely expressed their political beliefs. Their continued incarceration goes against the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, of which the U.S. is itself the primary author.

Two of these Political Prisoners are Nebraskans. Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa (formerly David Rice) are currently serving their twenty-eighth year in prison. Past issues of *Buffalo Chip* have outlined some of the questionable evidence brought against them. In this issue is the text of a 1970 FBI memo, obtained by Ed and Mondo through the Freedom of Information Act, which indicates very clearly that the FBI and the Omaha police colluded to withhold evidence from their trial because it may have created doubt in the minds of the jury.

Nebraska is like the rest of the country in addressing crime issues: it has opted for punishment instead of prevention. The perfect paradigm: in one of his last acts as governor, Ben Nelson approved a \$40 million appropriation to build a new prison, and vetoed a \$40 million aid to education bill.

Questions of eligibility for parole or commutation of sentence (the latter to make those with life sentences eligible for parole) have been politicized nationwide, and Governor Ben Nelson and Attorney General Don Stenberg have made much political hay in Nebraska out of being "tough on crime."

Anyone who reads the statistics on the disproportionate number of persons of color in U.S. prisons and on death row, who realizes that world condemnation of human rights abuses in the U.S. is growing, and who watches the continuing politicization of crime and punishment by U.S. state governors and Attorneys General, must be alarmed at what COINTENPRO and the "War on Crime" have done to the Bill of Rights.

When Roman Catholic Governor Mike Johanns took office in January, there was hope that he would bring a renewed vision of justice and mercy to the Nebraska Board of Pardons. Instead, he gives every indication that, since he'll walk like a duck, quack like a duck and look like a duck, he must be another Ben Nelson.

As long as elected officials continue to believe they get elected by being tough on crime, they'll continue

to appropriate more money for law enforcement and more money for prisons and their maintenance -- and the costs of these policies will continue to erode funds desperately needed to prevent crime, and, worse, erode the climate of trust and tolerance so necessary to maintain in a diverse country like ours.

Governor Johanns' record so far is discouraging. He refused to vote to hold a hearing for death row inmate Randy Reeves, to determine whether mitigating circumstances merited a commutation of his sentence. And he replaced the Chairperson of the Parole Board, which hitherto, in spite of every effort of Ben Nelson to change it, has resisted politicizing issues of commutation and parole, and continued to apply objective criteria to these questions. Now, after five consecutive years of recommending parole for both Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa, the new Parole Board has announced that it has established new criteria, i.e., that to be eligible for parole, inmates must have no infraction of the rules on their records, no matter how minor, for five consecutive years. Since infractions can be very arbitrarily established by prison authorities, and "minor" infractions include such actions as not wearing socks, or putting food in a napkin to give to a fellow inmate, the results will be obvious. The intent seems equally obvious. This punitive approach is an effective way to assure that U.S. Political Prisoners like Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa remain in cages.

But though U.S. elected officials and prison authorities refuse to admit the existence of Political Prisoners in the U.S., the rest of the world is watching, and standards are changing. The case of Chile's Augusto Pinochet and the activities of the World Court in The Hague look to be the beginning of new international standards of human rights. The day may even come when the world will hold accountable all those who abuse human rights.

The apartheid government of South Africa was finally brought down by a world embargo, and who could have believed in 1980 that Political Prisoner Nelson Mandela would become President of his country.



BUFFALO CHIP

NEEDS YOUR HELP AGAIN ...

And again, many thanks for your generosity. Your contributions are our sole source of funding and we appreciate your gifts. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO Buffalo Chip, and mail to 1314 S. 9th St., Omaha, NE 68108. Thanks!

YES, I'd like to help. Here's my check for \$_____.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP _____



JERICHO NETWORK *(cont. from p. 1)*

ing himself and six other people who were never charged. At a preliminary hearing Peak explicitly stated that Rice and Poindexter were not involved, and he told defense attorney David Herzog that the police told him he "was sitting in the electric chair" and had better cooperate with them. During the trial, prosecutors violated Ed's and Mondo's free speech rights by using the contents of the Black Panther newspaper as evidence that Ed and Mondo would commit the crime).

The political motives behind the trial were reaffirmed in 1994, when Omaha police detective Jack Swanson stated in a BBC documentary about the case, "I think we did the right thing at the time, because the Black Panther Party ... completely disappeared from Omaha [after] we got the main players."

Ascher then announced that Jericho was demanding the commutation of sentences to time served or new trials for the following men incarcerated for political dissent: Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, Edward Poindexter, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Raymond Luc Levasseur, Carlos Alterto Torres, Yu Kimkukora, and Kojo Bomani Sababu.

Ascher gave examples of growing world attention to human rights abuses in the U.S.: Amnesty International has targeted the U.S. for possible abuses of the death penalty and for the conditions and treatment of prisoners; the United Nations Sub-Committee on Discrimination against Minorities has taken the political imprisonment of Leonard Peltier under investigation; and the European Parliament at Strasbourg, France passed a resolution on Dec. 15, 1998 demanding that Leonard Peltier be granted Presidential Executive Clemency, that he receive appropriate medical care at once for his painful jaw condition; and that Mumia Abu-Jamal should be granted a fair trial and a stay on his death sentence.

Ascher concluded by reading a statement by Political Prisoner Kojo Bomani Sababu, as follows:

"The spirit of struggle resides in us all! As one of the Political Prisoners, I am pleased with the work currently underway on behalf of all Political Prisoners. Your efforts make our lives safer while in bondage with those who criminalize resistance from oppression, repression, and denials of human rights. I am convinced that the work of supporters will lead to a worldwide recognition of Political Prisoners within U.S. prisons. Thank you very much for your sincere commitment to seek our freedom."

DID YOU KNOW?

THE XIIITH AMENDMENT DID NOT COMPLETELY ABOLISH SLAVERY

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Article 1, Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

FROM COAST TO COAST

in a vestibule
of the apartment building in the Bronx
where he lived
where flying piranha fish of lead
zipped through confining space
to chew an unarmed man to death
who trapped by his dark skin
could not escape the swarm of death
that raged with puffs of smoke
and streaks of fire
from red-hot barrels of cold steel
in hands that were colder still
of undercover cops without sheets
whose inclination was to kill
in an act of social "cleansing"
that took mere seconds to enforce
Amadou fell
was swept in the murderous tide
like Tyhisha
the sister in Riverside
who just weeks before
had sat locked in her car
in a public place
out cold and slouched in the seat
in the haze of an epileptic sleep
that left her vulnerable
as she was slumped there alone
with a gun on her lap
when the police arrived
to bang on the window at first
but banging on glass
did not quench the thirst
for blood
of devils in blue
whose brimstone eyes blazed
with genocidal urge to turn
a car into a hellish tomb
and fingers yanked at triggers
in eager interplay
to end the light of day
for one African too many
in a California town
after sundown.

mondo

A LETTER TO THE NEBRASKA BOARD OF PARDONS

from the Brotherhood of the Midwest Guardians, Inc., read at the Jericho press conference in Lincoln, NE, on 3/25/99:

"Once again we write to you in support of David Rice and Edward Poindexter, in requesting a hearing before you. We feel that would only be just to give them the opportunity to be heard.

"The Brotherhood of the Midwest Guardians is an organization of African American Police Officers, who are retired and active members of the Omaha Police Department. We have members who were very active in the investigation of the crime of which these two are accused. We consulted with them prior to taking the vote to support Rice and Poindexter. The information that was shared with us greatly influenced our vote of support.

"We recognize that our decision to support Rice and Poindexter may not sit well with others in law enforcement, with one exception. That exception would be, except for those who are truly interested in justice being served. We should not fear the truth.

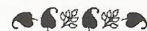
As we look back at America during the "turbulent 60's and 70's," we as a society have acknowledged that law enforcement officers oftentimes were overzealous in our enforcement of the law. Violating both the law and departmental policy and procedures. We as a society have been asked to forgive and forget, and move on. For the most part we have. But we can't have complete closure, or healing until we address and correct the injustices suffered by the targeted community. We are asked to remember the "times," when we talk about police misconduct. Shouldn't we also remember the "times" when we talk about those who may have been victims of that same misconduct?

"In closing we would like to point out that we know that you do not decide on guilt or innocence, and we are not arguing for that. We hope that you depart from the hype surrounding this case and allow David Rice, aka

Mondo, and Edward Poindexter, to be heard in front of your board.

"Respectfully submitted

"Tariq 2X Al-Amin, Vice President"



PRIVATIZING PRISONS; OR, WOULD YOU BUY

A USED CAR FROM THIS MAN?

Read All About It: Campaign Contributions from a Tennessee Prison Exec to Wisconsin Lawmakers.

After a near-fatal assault on a guard who was supervising Wisconsin inmates at a privately owned and run prison last summer in Whiteville, Tenn., the chairman of Corrections Corporation of America, began making healthy campaign donations to Wisconsin State legislators, including the Senate majority leader, the Assembly Corrections Committee chairman and three Republicans on the Joint Finance Committee.

Shortly after the prison attack, Wisconsin inmates told state corrections officials that they were beaten, shocked with stun guns and sexually abused by CCA staff investigating the assault. Eight employees were dismissed after the state discovered evidence of inmate abuse. The state currently has about 2,100 inmates at CCA facilities.

Two of the legislators who received donations -- Reps. Scott Walker (R. Wauwatosa) and Dean Kaufert (R. Neenah) went to Tennessee in November as part of a five-member legislative task force to investigate the situation.

The four Republicans on the trip concluded that there was no reason to stop sending inmates to CCA prisons.

CCA spokeswoman Susan Hart said there was no connection between Crants' giving and the problems at the Tennessee facility.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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